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Smokeyumper Obituary: Crain, Dan Louis (Fairbanks 1989)

National Smokeyumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Crain, Dan Louis (Fairbanks 1989)

Dan jumped at Fairbanks 1989-92. Dan, 42, of Spearfish, South Dakota, died August 3, 2003, in a kayak accident on the Clarks Fork River of the Yellowstone in Montana. The run contained two day of challenging Class IV-V water and several mandatory passages.

The group of seven were on the second day and, even though it contained three who had made the trip before, they forgot the mandatory passage around an unrunnable section of the river.

"Dan Crain, 42, a former college football player and smokejumper, was knocked unconscious. He was still in his boat when he washed into the first pool. He then went over a 20 foot falls. This led into another massive sieve that dropped 30 feet into a second pool below. When rescuers got to his kayak he was no longer inside. His body was spotted four hours later, pinned between two rocks in the middle of the river. It could not be recovered for several weeks."

"Dan, age 42, was born on November 12, 1960, in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas. He spent his early childhood in Spearfish and returned to the area in 1985. He was valedictorian of the class of 1989 at Black Hills State College and graduated with a B.S. in Biology.

"Dan was a global traveler and adventurer, and had a strong commitment to the global community, the environment, and to outdoor activities. He eventually incorporated these interests into thriving businesses in Spearfish and Rapid City. Dan started his business out of his backpack while staying with a host family in Guatemala and grew it into a one-of-a-kind enterprise that served the Black Hills communities.

"Dan was an expert class-five kayaker and proved himself on some of the most challenging white water in the world. His main focus was pioneering the Big Horns and he is credited for several first descents. He was recently featured in the last three editions of American Whitewater, where he was described as a "bad-ass" butterfly."

(end of excerpt)